

# The Republican.

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## CRISIS.—No. IV.

THE preparatory din of war goes on—armed associations are openly avowed—every countenance carries a hostile feature—the crisis must be near. Let us, then, enquire what is the duty at the present moment of those who have resolved to fight in defence of their liberty and laws, their lives and property. When an enemy is at hand, and likely to fall on us, when we know that we have not given that enemy any just cause for commencing hostilities against us, the first act of the honest and courageous mind, would be the means of defence; those prepared, he would say, "The cause for which I am attacked, is an unjust cause, the cause for which I am about to defend myself is just. I will therefore defend myself whilst I have strength, and if I am overpowered and must fall a victim, I will sell my life as dear as possible, and die the death of the virtuous and the brave." I would anxiously impress this feeling on the minds of my oppressed countrymen, because I really believe that the time is near at hand when they must resolve to act on the defensive. Armed associations are every where entering into; for what? For the avowed purpose of defending things as they are and likely to be. Then a co-operation becomes necessary on the part of every free mind and lover of liberty, to whom I would say, "Go thou, take arms, and learn their use likewise; form yourselves into armed associations; let every meeting to practise be open and previously avowed; there is no law that you will offend by doing this, provided you do nothing in secret." When the volunteer associations took place in this country, in consequence of the threatened invasion, the seventh days, otherwise called Sundays, were well employed in training to the use of arms in bodies, as it is a day when the ordinary occupations are not generally followed in this country; embrace that opportunity, you have no time to mis-spend, you must be on the alert, or your enemies will be beforehand with you; although they are not numerically equal to you, they will endeavour to terrify and disunite you. If you cannot conveniently join those bodies

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that are likely to be furnished with arms by the Tax-collectors and consumers, if you cannot obtain arms by the subscriptions that are entered into for that purpose, follow the advice of Luke, sell your garment rather than be without a sword, or some other weapon of defence; the time is not far distant when a weapon of defence will be more desirable than the garment. Painful as such a crisis is to contemplate, to prepare for it is a virtue. Criminal as the result of this state of things may be, they are not chargeable on you the People; ye are goaded to desperation and madness by oppression, and now your oppressors have made your burdens intolerable, and have left you almost bloodless, they would finish their career by making you lifeless by military execution. That arch fiend and curse of mankind, Castlereagh, is plotting the same scenes of blood and cruelty in this country, as he lately enjoyed in Ireland; nothing but union, co-operation, and determination on the part of the People to die fighting in their defence, if necessary, can stay his merciless hand. The miseries of their countrymen are a feast to such men as Castlereagh and Canning. They can treat with ribaldry and sarcasm the pangs of hunger, and the pale shiverings of the naked. Their pleasures increase in proportion with the increase of their country's wretchedness.

Public meetings are become more than ever important, they should be determinedly periodical and simultaneous in all parts of the country; those who advise the contrary are guided by an impulse of the fear of their expected attendance, and not from a sense of the impropriety. They attempt to argue that meetings at this moment will afford a pretext to a wicked administration to pursue harsh and *unconstitutional* measures. The administration will pursue those measures without any other pretext or pretence than they have already found. It is more than probable that those measures will be instantly put in force on the meeting of the Boroughmongers' tools, and nothing but a prepared and determined resistance on the part of the People can or will counteract their present avowed intentions. The People must resolve to act instantly and simultaneously the moment they find the attempt to suspend the Habeas Corpus is made, or the abridgement of the present laws relating to public meetings, or the present arrangement with the press is altered. These are the three important things to be looked after. If the People lose the slight privileges they enjoy from those objects at present, they will no longer be a Peo-



ple, but slaves by charter. Virtue and courage are the two requisites on the part of the People; their enemies will goad their mercenaries to desperation by intoxication, misrepresentation, or holding out to them the hope of plunder. A handful of brave and virtuous men have been known to counteract the movements of a large army. Liberty or Death must be the watch-word, and to conquer or die, should be engraven on the mind and heart of every man. Revolutions have frequently taken place, but the object to be gained was never before of half the importance as the present. If the People of this country can shake off the locusts that have eaten their way into the body politic, one of the most sublime eras that the mind of man can contemplate would follow. Such is the extent of political information among all the operative classes in this country, so different is it from any former period, that one of the most pure and correct systems of Government would follow a convulsion, that any society could live under. None but the virtuous and good would continue more than a year in any office, and so much under the controul of the People would be the vicious, that they would shrink from the stimulus of their own passions. Then whilst we have objects of such magnitude in view, they should stimulate us to virtue and to courage. Let us, then, cherish a hope that our affairs are not irretrievable; magnanimity performs wonders—pusillanimity is its own canker-worm. Virtue and bravery have stimulated republicans in all ages—look at the colonies of America aided by “Common Sense,” and the “Crisis;”—look at republican France—look at republican Rome—look at republican Greece. Monarchy is the parent of vice, Republicanism of virtue. These are experimental facts, the knowledge of which have been dearly purchased by mankind in general.

That portion of the People of this country who advocate a change in the system of Government, have nothing to fear; their whole conduct should be candid and open; let every preparation be made both in arms and training, but let that preparation be made openly. A civil war is evidently the intention of the Regent and his Ministers; they publicly avow it; they have no hopes of continuing the present oppressive system but by military force and execution, and the *ultima ratio regum* is shortly to be put in practice.

The laws of the country are become a mere dead letter; if an oppressed individual, or one who is obnoxious to the advocates of the present system, appeals to them to resent

an assault or robbery committed on him, he is treated with derision and contempt by those who pretend to sit and administer the laws and justice. There is nothing in reality in the country, neither liberty, property, nor laws. Prepare for the change—prepare for the convulsion that is necessary to produce that change—be prepared for the worst, an attempt to establish in this country a military despotism. We have a Prince, who, though not a soldier himself, is like a child, very fond of gaudy, military trappings, and is so partial to the military habit, as often to wear it when on magisterial duties; the whole of his Court is strictly military, and there is no doubt but his frenzied dreams are military. Then, under such a state of things as this, is it not the duty of every honest citizen to seek weapons of defence, and to learn the use of them?—I say, yes; it is become a duty, and to neglect it will be a crime.

RICHARD CARLILE.

*King's Bench Prison,*  
Nov. 8, 1819.

A Servant Girl, who is happy she escaped the pressing times of King David, as described in the four first verses of the 1st chapter of the 1st book of Kings, those of Solomon, who pressed every female that was fair, and came in his way, and those of Hosea, when the Lord commanded him to choose a wife from amongst the prostitutes of the city, Hosea, chap. i. ii. & iii. prays God save Carlile, and subscribes a Shilling.

The singularity of the above has induced us to give insertion to it in this distinct manner; it was received and valued as that teacher of Deism (Jesus) valued the widow's mite.—EDITOR.

The receipt of £1. from J. S. of Cambridge is acknowledged.

R. CARLILE TO DR. RUDGE.

King's Bench Prison, Oct. 28, 1819.

R. CARLILE acknowledges the receipt of Dr. Paley's "Evidences of Christianity" by the hand of Dr. Rudge's servant, of which he will take particular care, and return them as early as possible. R. Carlile is pleased to find that Dr. Rudge is candid enough to admit that there are parts of the Bible objectionable and offensive to decency and good morals. Dr. Rudge should recollect that it is for the mere publication of such an opinion that R. Carlile is likely to suffer a heavy imprisonment and a fine, which is suggested on one side and threatened on the other, to deprive him of all that



he possesses, save a fond family, and a good conscience. R. Carlile is surprised, that after such an admission as the above, Dr. Rudge can persist in calling it the Word of God, and still more so, when he ventures to liken the objectionable parts of this book to the spots in the sun. God of Nature! what an insult to the reflecting mind, that a scene of debauchery, cruelty, and wickedness contained in a book, the evident work of man without thy aid, should be compared to any portion of thy works, and this too, by one who is distinguished with the title of a Doctor in Divinity!—Be my theme the continued opposition to such sentiments as these. R. Carlile thinks that Dr. Rudge has made the most unfortunate comparison he could have hit upon. R. Carlile is still further surprised, that Dr. Rudge should so soon abandon Sir Isaac Newton and others, as authorities for the Bible being of divine origin, to charge them with “inconsistency and hypocrisy,” and to hold out a caution, that “too much deference should not be paid to the opinions of great men.” Dr. Rudge appears, by the conclusion of his last letter, to be still firm in his faith; and R. Carlile assures Dr. Rudge, that he still remains firm in his former belief. R. Carlile has read Dr. Rudge’s Address to a Parishioner, and begs to observe, that Dr. Rudge’s opinion of the Trinity is far above his comprehension.

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#### DR. RUDGE TO R. CARLILE.

DR. RUDGE presents his compliments to Mr. Carlile, and he has to acknowledge the receipt of his letter of this day.

In continuing this correspondence, Dr. R. has to regret that he was unable to express himself with a clearness sufficient to have prevented the misrepresentation of his meaning, which appears in Mr. Carlile’s favour of this day’s date.

Dr. Rudge observed upon two prejudices which often proved, in his mind, fatal to the investigation and establishment of truth. One was, that men were oftentimes led, from certain objectionable passages, to denounce the *whole* of the Bible, and reject it as the word of God. He inferred that this was an unfair practice. He continues to think so; but he has found it invariably to be the case in all the conversations he has had with Deists.

Another prejudice to which he referred, was that which arises from taking as law, the dicta of some great man, and attaching an extravagant degree of importance, and infallibility to them. All men are liable to err in matters of judgment and conduct. Mr. Paine as well as all who have written and lived before him. Their opinions and sayings oftentimes tincture the mind with prejudice, and prevent the search of truth. Mr. Carlile had expressed some unfavourable sentiments respecting Sir Isaac Newton, and Mr. Locke; that on one time they had written in favour, and at another in disparagement of the truths of Christianity. Without at all entering into the inquiry, whether this was true or false,

as it respected these great men, but at the same time without abandoning his own opinions which had been formed from an intimate acquaintance with their writings, Dr. R. thought it better to express himself in the manner in which he did, than repeat the suggestions which he offered in his first letter, more especially as there appeared to exist in Mr. C.'s mind a prejudice both against Sir Isaac Newton and Mr. Locke. Dr. R.'s object was, that Mr. Carlile should sit down to the Examination of the "Evidences of Christianity," neither swayed by the opinions, nor prejudiced against the conduct and principles of any man—neither against the principles of Mr. Locke and Sir Isaac, on the one hand, nor by the opinions of Mr. Paine on the other; and he still sincerely hopes that this will be the case.

Dr. R. is neither surprised, nor offended by the latter part of Mr. C.'s letter. He appealed to Mr. Carlile, that he commenced this correspondence in a good spirit, and he shall conduct it with good temper. Dr. R. dislikes controversy of any kind; and should, in these private communications between him and Mr. Carlile any thing drop from his pen of a seemingly harsh or repulsive nature, he hopes he will forgive him. Nothing is farther from his intention.

Limehouse,

October 28, 1819.

*Mr. Carlile.*

Dr. R. hopes the perusal of the enclosed will not be uninteresting.

### R. CARLILE TO DR. RUDGE.

*King's Bench Prison, Nov. 5th, 1819.*

R. CARLILE has to acknowledge the receipt of Dr. Rudge's letter, dated the 28th ult. accompanied with the Memoirs of John Vartie. In respect to the letter, R. Carlile has perused and re-perused it, and cannot find a single point to answer, he will therefore close this correspondence, with making a few observations on the Memoir of John Vartie, and Paley's Evidences of Christianity. R. Carlile cannot perceive Dr. Rudge's object in sending him the memoir of the unfortunate Vartie, who alledges he became an infidel from reading novels and other light works. R. Carlile assures Dr. Rudge, that the reading of novels had not made him an infidel to Christianity, for he has invariably objected to any novels being read by any of his family, over whom he has had any controul. Nothing can reflect higher credit on the cause of Deism, than to observe that a true and sincere Deist has never yet been brought to the gallows. Search the Old Bailey Calendars, search all the records of executions under the law, and Dr. Rudge will find that the victims have invariably been Christians. The Christian finds encouragement to vice, because even a death-bed repentance promises him salvation and future happiness. The Deist, who believes in nothing



of this kind, places himself under a continual moral restraint, and regulates well his passions.

With respect to the Evidences of Christianity, by Paley, R. Carlile finds nothing conclusive or satisfactory in them. His preparatory considerations are mere quibbles on Hume's Essay on Miracles, an essay which contains irrefragable proofs of the fallacy of believing in supernatural events or miracles. His five first chapters are attempted arguments in favour of the Christian religion, drawn from the martyrdoms of the early Christians. Martyrdom proves nothing (says Diderot), but that the martyrs are the weakest party. When Constantine made the Christian religion the religion of the state, and when Christianity reared her destructive head, the same firmness and resolution was displayed by those who were martyrs to a dissent from any of its established rules; the same constancy has been displayed by martyrs in all ages, Catholic or Protestant, Christian, Jew, or Pagan. Let Dr. Rudge turn his attention to the superstitious rites and victims paid to Jugernaut and other Deities in the Eastern world: have we not lately heard that the most excruciating tortures have been voluntarily endured by certain devotees, which, in the opinion of R. Carlile, far exceeds the constancy of the martyred Christians, because the former was voluntary, the latter forced? Should the hug Superstition again demand victims of Philosophy and Deism, they will readily be found. R. Carlile has no hesitation in saying, that should that opinion which has lately been charged on him as blasphemy in the next session of parliament be made punishable with the faggot and stake, he would persevere in promulgating them; so strong is his conviction of their truth. In the sixth chapter of Paley's first volume, page 105, is an assertion which has staggered R. Carlile, and has induced him to throw away Paley as a dishonest man, and unworthy of further notice: it is thus.—“*That the original story was miraculous (alluding to the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus,) is very fairly also inferred from the miraculous powers which were laid claim to by the Christians of succeeding ages. If the accounts of these miracles be true, it was a continuation of the same powers; if they be false, it was an imitation, I will not say, of what had been wrought, but of what had been reported to have been wrought by those who preceded them. That imitation should follow reality; fiction should be grafted upon truth; that, if miracles were performed at first, miracles should be pretended afterwards, agrees so well with the ordinary course of human affairs, that we can have no great difficulty in believing it. The contrary supposition is very improbable, namely, that miracles should be pretended to by the followers of the apostles and first emissaries of the religion, when none were pretended to, either in their own persons or that of their masters, by those apostles and emissaries themselves.*” This is one of the most sophistical, *petitio principii* modes of reasoning that can be met with, and yet this is a sample of the whole of Paley's Evidences of Christianity.

The argument of Paley is simply this:—rather than disbelieve the miracles said to have been performed by Jesus and his disciples, I would believe all the miracles said to have been performed by Roman and other Christian priests in all ages; or, in other language, he says it is a proof that the first were actually performed, because the latter pretended to them. This may satisfy the credulity of Christians, but not the philosopher and the Deist.

The above paragraph needs no further comment nor exposition; it must strike the dullest capacity, and is a strong proof of the fact of an observation said to have been made by Paley, when told that his conscience could not support certain arguments he had been using, he replied "*that he could not afford to keep a conscience.*" The whole of the first volume is a tedious repetition of similar absurdities, and nothing argues more strongly the total want of evidence to support the dogmas of the Christian religion, than the innumerable volumes that have been written to support it. Was the Christian religion founded on an atom of truth, half a dozen pages would be quite sufficient to display it; it would not need to be defended in such a variety of ways, independent of force and falsehood. Not one demonstrable truth can be brought to support it. Truth needs not the sophistical arguments of a Paley, nor the flowery metaphors of Charles Phillips; simplicity is its handmaid, it has no connection with laboured, false, and abstruse modes of reasoning. Paley has done all that can be done for the Christian religion; he has done all that ingenuity and ability could do for it; he has not convinced any man that is capable of reasoning, and the Christian religion remains what it was before Paley wrote, founded in error, falsehood, and credulity. There are two points on which all controversy of this description should hinge. Has there been a written revelation from God to man or not? Do the human race stand in need of a Saviour and Mediator to intervene between man and his Maker? Of the first question, R. Carlile can find no substantial proofs, but many in contradiction of it: of the second he cannot perceive the necessity, because he believes the Deity to be omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient. Whether Dr. Rudge will consider that R. Carlile has fairly conducted the correspondence, he does not pretend to say; he has done it to the best of his ability, and with the strictest sense of rectitude. The reason R. Carlile has thought proper to publish this correspondence is, that he felt it incumbent on him in his present situation to seize every opportunity of making known to the public his motives and conduct;—he courts the strictest examination, and determines to persevere in the same path he has lately trod, whilst the *merciful Christians*, into whose hands he has fallen, will allow him the use of pen, ink, and paper, and a free communication with the public. Dr. Rudge, perhaps, will still think that R. Carlile retains the prejudice of human reason. Reason and real conviction can never arise from prejudices, which



Paine beautifully describes as the spider that spins its web on the mind.

Diderot has well described the priestly conflict with reason in the following words. "Bewildered in an immense forest during the night, and having only one small torch for my guide, a stranger approaches and thus addresses me:—'Friend, blow out thy light, if thou wouldst make sure of the right path.'" This stranger was a priest.

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TO MR. RICHARD CARLILE.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HOPE you will excuse the liberty I take in addressing you. Seeing it was your intention to endeavour to prove in a court of justice the Bible to be a forgery, I could not resist the opportunity of soliciting your attention to the enclosed small volume by Dr. Chalmers, on the subject which has been a means of confirming my own belief of its genuineness—and perhaps may also be of use, to shew you that Christians have at least strong grounds for considering it an inspired volume.

May you yet be led to seek salvation through the merits of that Saviour, so clearly revealed in those Scriptures, you at present reject, but which have been the means of conferring happiness on thousands of our fellow-creatures.

I remain, my dear Sir,

Your sincere well-wisher,

WILLIAM CARLILE.

4, Durham Place East,  
Hackney Road.

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TO MR. WILLIAM CARLILE:

King's Bench Prison, Oct. 18, 1819.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE the honour as well as the satisfaction to acknowledge the receipt of a letter, with a volume of Chalmers' Evidences and Authority of the Christian Religion as a Divine Revelation, for which I return you my sincere thanks.

In return, also, I have sent you a copy of Paine's Theological Works, with this pledge, that if you will do justice to your reason, and examine it, I will in return give you my opinion on the Evidences of Chalmers, and shall be most happy to receive yours on the Theological Works of Thomas Paine.

I beg to assure you, that I feel a consolation that raises me superior to all my persecution, arising from a consciousness that the moral welfare of man has been my only object. It appears to me, also, that you are impressed with what I call a similar virtue.

Wishing you a life of health and happiness, and that you may escape the fang of all persecutors on matters of religion,

I subscribe myself,

An affectionate fellow-creature,

**RICHARD CARLILE.**

*Mr. William Carlile.*

### MR. RICHARD CARLILE.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAD the pleasure of receiving your Letter of the 18th ult., with a copy of Paine's Theological Works—at the same time mentioning that if I gave you my opinion of them, you would in return give yours on Chalmers' Evidences of the Christian Revelation.

In the hope of Chalmers being instrumental to your eternal happiness, I examined Paine's Theological Works. They are the writings of a very able man, and if his works were perused only by humble Christians who were disposed to examine the Bible for themselves, with prayer to God for a spirit of understanding, and compare his writings with it, I should not fear the result; they might then, perhaps, be rather beneficial than otherwise, as they contain the objections not only of himself, but many who were before him; and it is well to have all objections fairly canvassed, that our faith may be more deeply rooted.

But unfortunately his works may pass into the hands of those who will gladly believe them to be true without such examination, and also into the hands of the rising generation, who are not able to judge for themselves, and who imbibing his principles may all their life-time walk in darkness without attaining true holiness, but subject to the power of an evil spirit; for although Mr. Paine may hold Satan in derision, his influence over our minds is very powerful, and may easily be known by any one who can examine his own heart.

I do not say they may not also fall into the hands of some who may conscientiously believe them to be true, and circulate them in the hopes of being useful to their fellow-creatures, because you state that the moral welfare of man is your only object in their promulgation. I can only assure you, that I feel truly sorry our opinions should be so much at variance on a subject of such immense importance as the salvation of our immortal souls; according to my ideas, the Bible is written by men inspired by God to shew us the way to heaven, which to me appears clear and simple.

We have only to pray to him for his holy spirit to guide us, which he will readily grant, and then come with humble confidence, trusting in the merits of our Saviour to redeem us, for we have sinned against him, and he will accept us, and when we leave this world we shall be removed to Heaven, there to enjoy eternal blessedness.



I no more doubt the truths contained in the Bible than I doubt my own existence. I see the fall of man clearly stated, and when I examine my own heart I find it is but too true. I read in the Bible that if the Israelites forsake their God, they shall be scattered among all People, and among these nations they shall find no ease; and it is even so at the present moment. Were it necessary I might give you many other instances of its predictions being fulfilled. But I acknowledge, at the same time, that there are many passages in the Scriptures that I do not at present fully comprehend, and with our limited capacities I do not wonder that it should be so.

Being much occupied in business, I beg to apologize for not answering your letter sooner, as I wished to finish Paine's Works before I answered it. My opinion of Paine himself, corresponds exactly with what it is said he expressed before he died, that if ever the Devil had an agent he was one. With a proud spirit he could not bear to depend on the merits of another for acceptance with God, which is the case with thousands at the present day. The same spirit of pride is in each of us, and it is by the assistance of the Spirit of God alone that we are enabled to overcome it.

I would again most earnestly beseech you to solicit that assistance, which he has promised to those that ask in faith; and although you have been a means of raising the standard of infidelity higher than it has stood for many years, you may yet be made an instrument in the hand of Him who created us, of shewing those poor unfortunate beings who have renounced their Bible, the utter impossibility of mere human reason leading them to true happiness.

A time is rapidly approaching when we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God to answer for our actions here: there is an awful responsibility attending us, if we are the means of bringing eternal misery on our fellow-creatures: examine well your motives, let not the hope of gain induce you to send poison among the People. "What shall it profit you, if you gain the whole world and lose your soul."

Believe me, I have no intention of hurting your feelings, but I feel keenly for those deluded creatures who may be led astray by devices of Satan, who is still as "a raging lion, seeking whom he may devour."

I remain, your sincere well-wisher,

WILLIAM CARLILE.

4, Durham Place East, Harkney Road.

November 1, 1819.

R. CARLILE TO WILLIAM CARLILE.

DEAR SIR,

King's Bench Prison, Nov. 5th, 1819.

I HAVE the pleasure to acknowledge the receipt of your second Letter, dated the 1st inst. You commence with stating, that with

a hope of Chalmers being instrumental to my eternal happiness, you examined Paine's Theological Works, making that examination appear to be a condescension on your part. In the course of your examination you have discovered that they are the writings of a very able man, had you added very honest also, you would have combined our opinions of him. You imply some fear of the result of the contest, when you say, were the two books, (meaning the Age of Reason, and the Bible,) perused by humble Christians only, with prayer to God for a spirit of understanding: what sort of Christians the humble ones are I have never yet discovered; I find them generally haughty, arrogant, and self-assuming. They will not venture an argument with an opponent, without he consents to make admissions on the outset of the validity of their doctrines and faith.

The objections of Mr. Paine and other Deists you admit should be fairly canvassed, that your faith may be more deeply rooted. If you are sincere in this assertion, you would enter your protest against the silencing of those objections by the strong arm of distorted law. Those objections having never been answered by any other means, makes me bold to say, they are unanswerable.

Respecting such publications falling into the hands of the rising generation, I hesitate not to say, that I deem it imprudent and injurious to impress any system of faith or religious opinions on the minds of youth until they arrive at an age when they possess a judgment of those things, convinced as I am, that morality might be inculcated without the aid of superstitious, or if you please, religious notions. You speak of Mr. Paine's derision of the influence of Satan, as improper, and say, it might be easily known by any one who could examine his own heart. You, Sir, I doubt not, pity those persons in the Eastern and other parts of the world, who worship both the good and evil spirit with the same terror and feeling; yet to the impartial and unprejudiced observer, the belief of the Christian in a partial God, and the Devil, whom they equally dread and fear, is the same as the belief of the Persian, Indian, or any other in the good and evil spirits.

The man or woman who believes in the real, personal, or spiritual existence of Satan or the Devil, is in my opinion, not one remove in intellect from the idiot. The idiot, by a system of training, might be made useful, and the believers in the Devil are mere human automatons. They can have no possible reflection or contemplation of the works of the creation and of nature. They treat with a wicked contumely, that only superiority they enjoy beyond their fellow animal, and degradingly call it mere human reason. They possess the faculty of speech, but they make no better use of it than the dog of his barking, or the ass of his braying.

Your ideas of the Bible, of Heaven, and of a redeeming Saviour, are read and received by me as the vagaries of a frenzied brain, and as I have before mentioned, that I believe in nothing of the kind, I could wish you had spared yourself the trouble of repeating



them; however, I have no enmity towards you for believing in them, on the other hand, I feel a pity which is by no means inferior to the zeal which you have shewn to make me a convert to your wild notions—notions that cannot be defended by reason or argument.

In another sentence you observe, that you believe what was alleged to have been spoken by Paine: namely, that if ever the Devil had an agent on earth, he (Paine) was one. I am not a little surprised to hear this from one who says he has read the Theological writings of Paine. If you had read those writings with a candid and unprejudiced mind, you would have learned from them, that their author believed in no such a Deity as the Devil, and consequently could never have used the expression in any other way than a joke or a sarcasm. This in no wise can confine your belief—believe and tremble if you like it. I believe without fear or trembling—I have no fear of offending the Deity I contemplate, nor of being exposed to the wiles of any other than the LEGAL DEVILS. Even in a prison, I live under all the consolation the human mind can enjoy, free from pain both in mind and body, without any fear even of the future.

With regard to that spirit of pride you speak of, as existing in each of us, it ill corresponds with your former assertions of “humble Christians,” but rather more with my observation on them. Rochefoucault has well defined the pride of man or of human nature when he says, “The pride of all men is alike, it differs only in the means and manner of shewing it.” Your idea of seeking the assistance of the spirit of God to overcome it, is a piece of fanaticism mingled with hypocrisy.

You say I have raised the standard of infidelity higher than it has been for many years. The standard I have raised, I swear never to desert. I will live or die in its defence.

I have examined well my motives and the probable result of them. I am still convinced that I am doing that which is right and good, and that which is calculated to ameliorate the present degraded condition of man. I have an object superior even to gain in view. It could not be gain that induced me to republish the Parodies of Mr. Hone, after a prosecution had been commenced against him, and he had thought proper to discontinue the sale, and in consequence of discontinuing the sale, the government had dropt their intention to prosecute their informations against him any further: I saw this, and determined that a publication so simple and harmless should not be put down because a false and clamorous charge had been brought against it by a wicked and corrupt government. I republished the Parodies, and was immediately arrested for it; I requested my wife to continue the sale, which she did; I was imprisoned in this prison for eighteen weeks, at an expence and loss of £50—I suffered all the punishment—fortune threw the benefits into the hands of Mr. Hone. He was not the object aimed at then to wreak their vengeance on, he was the first publisher; a

prosecution had been previously commenced against him; although suspended, the law officers of the crown could not possibly pass over that prosecution to get at me. Mr. Hone was thrice acquitted, which led to my liberation without trial, although the Attorney-General had a fourth information against me, independent of those that were similar to Mr. Hone's. I certainly published the Theological Works of Paine under different circumstances, but where is the man that would put the gain of 2 or £300 into the scale against so many years imprisonment? I had a much nobler motive than gain, or any thing that stimulates the mercenary mind. I felt convinced of the frauds and impostures of the religious establishments of this and other countries. I felt that civil liberty can never exist in the same country with an established priesthood, and feeling this, and approving and admiring the sentiments contained in the writings of Paine, I resolved to publish them at all hazards.

Without taking any further notice of Satan, whom you strive to elevate into importance, I shall take a brief view of Chalmers' and other alleged Evidences of Christianity. The Christians call the objections of the Deists to their religion stale, always the same, never any thing new advanced. The same thing might be said by the Deist to the supposed Evidences of Christianity, they are one and indivisible, something like their Trinity. The lives and writings of the fathers of the Christian Church, are the only class that leads us to any thing in the shape of an evidence, as no cotemporary authors have taken the least notice of the person of Jesus. Those very men who have since been canonized, and who are prayed to by Christians as a species of inferior deities, present the most disgusting picture of biography that ever disgraced the page of history. It was not until I had pondered over the pages of Eusebius, Socrates Scholasticus, and Evagrius, for many days in search after the Evidences of Christianity, (for if there are no evidences to be found in those writers, they are to be found no where else,) that I felt disgusted with the bickerings, jealousies, and priest-like characters of those fathers of the Christian Church. The more I sought its evidences, the more I became disgusted with the fraud, and from that moment resolved to spend my whole life in endeavouring to expose and annihilate it. Such is my firm conviction of the truths of those publications I have sent forth to the world, that I have no fear, if the supporters of bigotry and superstition would accept the challenge, that I could annihilate the belief in the Christian religion as of divine origin in this country, within seven years, and this too by a fair and honest sale of pamphlets and other publications, and not follow the paltry system of proping my opinions by the gratuitous circulation of MILLIONS of tracts, such as are circulated by the deceitful and hypocritical Christians. Depend on it, Sir, that it is too late now to attempt to support the fraud. The advice of Cardinal Woolsey should have been followed, when he told the Clergy that if they did not put down the printing press, it would put down them: it is now too



late. The Christian religion is at least suspected of being a fraud in England, it is laughed at in France, and an English barrister has asserted in one of our courts of law, that every enlightened mind in Europe was an infidel to it. The present rotten fabric of Church and State will fall together, and the representative system of government rise like a Phoenix from its ashes. I have stated before that no cotemporary authors have taken the least notice of the circumstances said to have taken place at his birth, or during his life-time. A similar tale exists in India of the birth of a Saviour, whose mother was a virgin betrothed to a carpenter, and every paltry and ridiculous tale in the Old and New Testament might be traced to have originated in Hindostan and other parts of the East. The very fathers of the Christian Church, from the date of the commencement of the Christian era, down to the time of Constantine, differ widely as to the time of the birth and life of their Deity. The following data having been furnished me by a correspondent from Hull, appears to be strictly applicable to this part of my letter, I shall therefore insert it.

"With regard to there being such a character as Jesus Christ, there is much reason to doubt. No cotemporary author, Roman, Greek, or Jew, ever so much as making mention of him, nor the star in Bethlehem, nor the journey into Egypt, nor the immaculate conception, nor the massacre under Herod, nor the crucifixion, nor the trial and prior imprisonment of Paul, who with his master did all in their power to produce a revolution and overturn the state. Would the History of England, or of any other country be silent on such a subject? No! There was no want of historians in that day to commemorate such events, had they taken place in A. U. C. 751 or 2, the date assigned for Christ's birth. At what period those things related of Christ and his apostles were trumped up, I do not pretend to know, but this I know, that the most learned commentators upon history have been greatly perplexed for want of authorities on so sublime a subject; even Dionysius Petavius in his *Rationarum Temporum*, to whom the learned world are much indebted for the pains he has taken to facilitate the student in history, by the laborious arrangement of his *Epitome* as to cotemporary characters and events, could find nothing to grace his page. In his first mention of Christ he opens thus, (as you will see on referring to his work) "In the year of Christ 14, the Emperor Augustus died at Nolæ in Campania, aged 76." This is the sum total of his early history of Christ, (if a blank may be called a history), what he has to say further on the subject is taken from what is vulgarly called the New Testament, i. e. that Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, and suffered a voluntary death for the sins of mankind, that he rose again on the third day, and on the fortieth ascended into heaven, as witnessed by the eyes of his disciples."

"As to what Pliny the younger says in his Letter to Trajan respecting a sect denominating themselves Christians, it makes nothing out to the purpose. From what Pliny writes the Emperor

respecting the Christians and their tenets, it may be fairly inferred that he never heard of any such profession before, Pliny being at that time on a mission in a distant province. Trajan's reply being to this effect—"Forbear to maltreat them on account of their strange profession (they being citizens of Rome) except they be accused by fanatics, of a wish to overturn the religion of the state, in that case you are bound to persecute them, for the Gods must not be blasphemed with impunity; at least, we must make it appear that we do not connive at such an enormity, let our opinions be what they may. I say, in that case, you are bound to persecute." This is the first and only mention made of Christians by any early profane author, within 80 years of what is assigned for the birth of Christ; what Pliny says is the demagogues strong hold! they cling to it as to a world of light.

"Now for a few of the opinions of the fathers (they may well be called fathers!) and other respectable authorities. Some say Christ was born in A. U. C. 751 or 2, (as I said before). Onuphrius and Pererius say he was born in the latter end of December, 752. Sixtus of Sienna places Christ's birth with Ann. Mund. 3962. Torniel in 4051.\* Talents says Christ died on the 25th of December, 4079 of the Julian period. Yet others say it was on the third of April, and pretend to prove it by the wonderful eclipse mentioned in St. Luke, which wonderful event was most wonderfully omitted by the rest of the Saints. Clements and Tertullian say he was crucified at 30 years of age; common opinion is, that he was 33. Yet St. Irenæus, a father who lived nearer the time specified than either of the other authors, says he was between 40 and 50."

"The Christians who make their epoch the birth of Christ, and as settled by act of parliament, to have taken place Ann. Mund. 3962, did not begin to use that computation till after the year 600, and perhaps in antipathy to the Hygera of Mahomet in 617, who have their Sabbath on the Friday, in contradiction to both Jews and Christians, and the Christians adopted Sundays no doubt for the same reason."

I must now draw this letter to a close. As it is likely to finish the correspondence between us on this subject, I have been more explicit than I might otherwise have been. Not being personally known to each other, although of the same name, I shall not expect to see or hear any thing further from you, unless you change your belief from Polytheism to Deism.

I am, Sir, yours respectfully,  
*Mr. William Carlile,* **RICHARD CARLILE.**  
 4, *Durham Place East, Hackney.*

\* The Greeks differ from the Latins 1500 years, and the Muscovites hold that Christ's birth took place A. M. 5508, always beginning their year on the first of September.